

Grafrica

New Directions For Positive People

VOL. IV NO. 43

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\$25 *

**CHRIS
KENO**



**TOM
COOKE**



The Good

**The Bad &
Ugly**

**The Race For Mayor Of East
Orange Heats Up!**

From The Publisher's Desk

While most political observers in New Jersey will be focusing on the gubernatorial race, a far more important contest will be taking place in the predominantly black town of East Orange between the incumbent mayor Tom Cooke and independent candidate Christine Keno. This race between Keno and Keno is so interesting and crucial because it is the first clear test of the level of sophistication of the northern black voter.

1981 will mark the end of a twenty-year cycle of political apathy for northern blacks which

began with the idealistic activism of the 60's through the frustration and apathy of the 70's. It was during this twenty-year period that a shameful trend of political came to fever pitch upon the black community. These were men who were somehow ashamed of the bold tactics and statements of their black brothers but nevertheless used their skin color to present themselves to the white power structure as leaders who could keep the lid on the political, social and economic aspirations of the

seething black masses. It was men like Tom Cooke who were too evil or cowardly to take their place on freedom rides and sit-ins, and were too embarrassed or intellectually narrow to address controversial issues, who were in back rooms making deals to sell out their people in exchange for support in their bids for elected office.

Men like Tom Cooke were building their little positions of power while people like Christine Keno and her daughters were risking their careers and even their lives for the advancement of black

people. It has been our observation at Grafica that Tom Cooke is a shameless, vicious liar who will commit any act to win public office. For example: 1) prior to his running against former mayor Hart he fabricated a story of a libelous attempt by Hart just in time for the pre-election newspapers; 2) during this year's primary election he promised the homeowners of East Orange that their taxes would not be raised only to send out the new increases the day after the primaries; 3) allegedly demanded \$1,000 donations from department heads (which is illegal); 4) kept black subcontractors from working on the Central Expressway; 5) replaced most black department heads at City Hall with whites; 6) has destroyed or crippled

every major black business in the city; 7) through gross ignorance has driven so many businesses from the city that he has had to resort to a parking ticket kiosk to keep the city from going bankrupt; 8) refuses to ask local banks why they have a policy of refusing loans to black businesses; 9) publishes a newspaper every election named "The New Times" to deceive the senior citizens; 10) has his administrative assistant (fiancee) Ed Stevens to gather dirt on potential enemies for extortion purposes (a prominent local minister was forced to support Cooke in the last primary through this tactic); 11) tried to arrange a back room sale of East Orange water reserves to a millionaire land developer.

In this coming election we have the classic con-

flict of Good vs Evil, Keno vs Cooke, and black voters will have the chance to demonstrate whether they have come of age and are no longer willing to be deceived by a pompous, two-faced liar like Tom Cooke.

Publisher's Note: We would like to apologize to our readers for this sudden blast of politics. As most of you are aware, we don't waste our pages on political class or politics, however, since East Orange is the home of Grafica and we have had a first-hand view of the unbelievable destruction of this once beautiful city under the Cooke administration, we knew it was our duty to make our position quite clear.

CHRISTINE KENO

We, the Citizens of East Orange, N.J. are at the cross-roads. Decisions that we make in this 1981 election will have a profound effect on our lives and the lives of our heirs in the future. We have elected to office, officials who were selected, approved and endorsed by the CONTROLLERS, that certain group of bankers, lawyers insurance executives, judges, trustees and/or board members of multinational corporations, members of boards of utility companies, food and drug lobbyists, air, water, land controllers, who propose, promote and enforce, through their appointees, self-serving, self-protecting, ordinances, codes, statutes, laws and schemes that are profitable to themselves and their cronies, at our expense/increased taxes.

Against our free-will, without our knowledge or consent, the CONTROLLERS force us to purchase a bunch of free-loaders living in 16 of 17 houses owned by the City of East Orange Water Commission at rental far below the fair market

price. All are alleged by the engineer of the water department to be currently employed by the East Orange Water Department, as overseers, and security, even though four are retired from the water department and others hold full-time jobs elsewhere. Records of their salaries are not available to the public, nor are the actual records available.

In addition to this bunch of free-loaders, we are forced to finance elected officials who increase their salaries during tenure and who possibly increase their income with what appears to be misuse of their expense accounts. The law department made special orders to prevent inspection of public records that show the original vouchers of expenditures made by council. There must be something that they are hiding. Even Touche and Ross, the certified public accountants do not have them nor have they made themselves privy to each original voucher. They say, so use one else. We pay for an accounting that is unsubstantiated and possibly a cover-up for fraud. The council ne-

sons have a salary of \$14,100 and some have increased their salaries to \$23,000 by use of expense accounts. Some are employed by the County of Essex and have expense accounts with the county, not to mention family members who are employed by East Orange and the county.

HUD, Mayor Cooke, council persons, and the law department collectively, upheld closed doors, entered into illegal, unconstitutional contracts, deals, agreements under false pretenses with out of state multi-millionaire contractor developers and granted tax abatements to the contractors without the consent or knowledge of the Citizens forcing the Citizens to carry the tax burden increase of the politically patronized multi-millionaires, through increased taxes. Under the guise of helping the poor, aged, low income, middle income, the elected officials of East Orange, the U.S. Housing Urban Development, through inflicting actions, caused those whom they alleged they helped to suffer pecuniary damages and in

some instances, loss of their homes. The actions of the Defendants were well planned, deliberate, negligent, deceitful, misleading, criminal, and a part of a master plan in violating LAND CONTROL.

For reasons set forth above the elected officials of East Orange cause the Citizens to pay a disproportionate amount of property taxes compared to that paid by millionaires. Properties valued from 1/2 to 1 million dollars, pay only \$3,500 to \$8,000, while properties valued at \$35,000 pay the same \$3,500. Disabled, unemployed, or other homeowners are KICKED OUT ON THE STREET for failure to pay taxes, and if delinquent

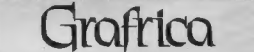
are charged 18 percent.

THE CONTROLLERS give patronage to the watershed free-loaders, unlimited expense account to our elected officials and make DEALS, AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS through selected, approved and

We are forced to carry the tax burden of OUT OF STATE MULTI-MILLIONAIRE CONTRACTOR DEVELOPERS, who are granted tax abatements under the guise of helping the poor, aged, needy, minorities, low and middle income when in fact, the abatements were and all are at the expense of the poor, aged, needy, minorities, low and middle income families. We have been forced to pay for deals over which we

have had absolutely no control, we were not aware of the deals. Now, that we are aware of the PARAGANO DEAL/ THE LAND SWAP/CLOSED BID DEAL, and have voiced our strong opposition, both, the council and the citizens are told that it is down. The Paragano Proposal involved a swap of land so that he could have exclusive rights to negotiate a deal to develop our watershed.

Defying the experts who stated that development of the watershed would cause degradation of our water supply, the council and Paragano seem to be playing a deceptive game of waiting until the election is over to decide whether or not to dedicate in favor of the wishes of the people.



Publisher
Andrea Fountain

Distribution Manager
Mark Winston

Staff Photographers
Bruce Terry
Glen Friseman
Ayana Njei

Editor
Paula B. Washington

Staff Writers
Edward Lloyd Fleming
Nevia Hilroy
Pepi Charles
April Eugene
Idrissa Asunta Baye
Jeddi G. Lahn
Acober

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Speaking Personally



Trick Or Treat On Election Day?

By Walter Wabert

The November general election will be a unique one in the history of East Orange politics. For the first time an independent candidate may garner a significant vote as a protest against the official Democratic buttlinistry.

The incumbent, Tom Cooke, who promised so much good government when campaigning for his first term, has been slowly exposed as a political Boss of the Tweed School. Numerous city employees have been harassed, threatened, and some have even lost their jobs for exercising their constitutional rights of free speech by campaigning for candidates of their own choice. If you speak out on given issues or refuse to work for Cooke or one of his cronies, your job may be in jeopardy. Evidence of the creeping cynicism and Cooke's unpopularity was his narrow defeat of Bill Hart in the last primary. If Hart had the heart to run as an independent this November, Cooke's political career may have ended in this election.

No doubt, this will be Cooke's last term as mayor and all that is needed is a viable candidate to emerge who has no ties with the current administration. Several potential candidates have their viability

diminished by their association with this incompetent group of carpetbaggers and relatives of Cooke whom have alienated the native population to an astonishing degree.

Christine Keno, the independent candidate, who is the subject of ridicule by the "main" petty officials is conducting a forthright campaign calling to question the various deals between Cooke and real estate developers. (see articles in this issue)

Mrs. Keno points to this conspiracy which exposes the impotency of the executive and administrative branches in controlling any real decisions. Elections at various levels are held so that the people will have representation. An elected official either administers or executes the law as now given, the executive branch or an elected official proposes law, the legislative branch. In either function, legislative or executive, the law must adhere to the basic framework of the constitution.

With a few exceptions, i.e., the Detroit Records Court, where a present Congressman, George Crockett, made controversial by ruling in favor of the medical Republic of New Africa, which is elected, the judiciary is appointed by the executive branch and approved by the legislative branch. This is called the system of checks and balances in U.S. Constitutional terminology; the essence of checks and balances is that no decisive power is transferred via

the elected process. That is why the court can cancel the New York City elections or their designation in the south was initiated by the Brown vs Supreme Court decision. A prime example in East Orange history of the impotency of the current representation system, was the fact that when Derrick Humphrey was killed in 1975, an outraged public found out that neither the mayor or city council had the power to suspend the police of fear involved, only the Chief of Police (who elects him?) had the authority.

If Mrs. Keno is elected, her recognition of who are the real controllers would allow her to be more effective, because she would not be obsessed with deceiving the public. Instead of spending her time engaged in pompous commercial activities, she would be able to begin dealing with the modicum of power that is vested in elected office.

The public, by voting for Keno, will be showing the controllers and their flunkies that we are aware of the real power relationships in society, and that the time is coming when the people will demand a constitution that deposits real power in the hands of their representatives.

Speaking Personally is an open forum provided for readers to express themselves. Please submit all typed manuscripts to: Editor, Graphica, 28 Emerson Street, East Orange, N.J. 07018.

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BOOKS



Harlem bellas, 1920's
(Schomburg Center, NYPL)

With a scholar's penchant for fact and a raconteur's flair for fancy, David Lewis has written a lively, informative account of the early twenties in New York that is bound to revive interest, as well as acquaint new audiences, with one of the most legendary periods of Afro-American history—the Harlem Renaissance.

In this thorough and penetrating study of the era, **When Harlem Was In Vogue** (Doubt, 381 pp., \$17.95), Lewis notes that "Almost everything we could possibly," and so it did.

received a tumultuous welcome home. "The statue to of leather on Fifth Avenue macadam rose and fell to the desecrating carpetopolis of apocalypse."

The war proved to be a significant turning point in the home front battle for social and political equality. As W.E.B. Dubois wrote in *The Crisis*—*"Make way for democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America, or know the reason why!"* It was the crest of the triumphant tide of returning soldiers that Black leaders such as Charles Johnson of the Urban League, Walter White of the NAACP and Dubois used as an impetus to marshal their forces against existing "quiescent." This time, the lynching must cease, the ballot booth open, and the jobs go to anyone who could work."

This initial thrust was

extended to the arts when Charles Johnson caustically observed that "one area alone...had not been proscribed. No exclusionary axes had been laid down regarding a place in the arts. Here was a small crack in the wall of racism, a fissure that was worth trying to widen." It seemed to be the sole battle plan affording both high visibility and low vulnerability. Each book, play, poem, or canvas by an Afro-American would become a weapon."

Johnson embarked on an ambitious and systematic program to bring talented writers and artists to Harlem. In this he was assisted by other prominent Blacks. The program also enjoyed the backing of wealthy patrons who were dubiously Negrophobic by endorsement. Zora Neale Hurston to indicate "whites who specialized in Afro-American uplift." The group included essayists and novelists.

Poet Bessie Harris, diarist Carl Van Vechten, Joel Spingarn and Julius Rosenberg, Sears, Roebuck tycoon. They and others such as Joel Spingarn were instrumental in securing publishing contracts for the literary talent that was so elegantly sought out.

The effort to create a mecca of Afro-American culture was unprecedented in its success, "Nowhere else in America were ordinary people as aware of the doings of their artists and actors, composers and musicians, painters and poets, sculptors and singers, and as literary and academic writers than in the Harlem of the mid and late twenties" writes Lewis.

The impressive roster of talent included artists Rommie Bearden, Aaron Douglas and Richard Fletcher Henderson, son, Eddie Blain and Richard Hayles. The writers produced by the renaissance included Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Toomer, Jessie Fauset, and countless others. David Lewis examines these writers, their work, their supporters and their detractors—

Jessie Fauset's novels about Harlem's elite were dismissed as boring by white critics, and the first book by a Black writer to reach the best-seller lists, Claude McKay's **Home To Harlem** was denounced by Black reviewers.

The role of the literary journals and publications that provided an outlet for these writers is of equal importance and Lewis discusses the progress

and let of the "Crisis," "Opportunity," "Survey Graphic," and Wallace Thurman's short lived enterprise "Fire".

As imposing as it was, the literary output far from comprised the sum total of the era which Anna Bornstein called "a fantasia of paradise."

Through Lewis' descriptive passages and anecdotal asides, we are treated to first hand accounts of the glitter and glamour that characterized the age. From Albia Walker's (daughter of hair straightening millionaire Madame C.J. Walker) grandiose mansion on Street's Row to the endless round of rent parties which were "the special passion of the community." From the plush Happy Rhone's to the Renaissance Ballroom and the majestic Rockland Palace to Haynes's Oriental favorite house of Paul Robeson. As Fats Waller put it so succinctly "The joint was really jumping."

If these were the halcyon days of culture and colorful characters such as "the heretofore seen 'Prophet' Martin," the mysterious heretofore publisher, "Black Heron," the Senegalese world leader character,

"Baiting Sid," and his lion mascot," they were also the days of economic strife, political exclusion and blatant bigotry. It was to these and other issues of important that men such as Marcus Garvey, Paul Robeson and socialists Aia Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen addressed themselves. Last we forget, protest did not originate in the states and Lewis provides documentation of resistance, both indi-

vidual and organized. Said Abdul Hamid was one who offered Harlem a political program and later organized a boycott campaign against white merchants, a step that "paved the way for the young Roosevelt Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and subsequent boycott campaigns."

Aside from the book's impact as an historical document, particularly appealing is *Author's Note's* elegant style. Lewis' elegant style is evident in the fascinating fragments that in turn ring these figures to life. No longer are they one-dimensional historical personages, but characters possessed of personalities, idiosyncrasies, taboos and failures which when blended with their brilliance, dash, talent and style become folk that are familiar in their frailty and vulnerability.

Many comprehensive accounts have been compiled about this beguiling episode in our history. However, writing with wit, sophistication, insight and perspective, Lewis has created, perhaps, the definitive account of that place and that time where "Garveyites, neo-Buddhists, socialists, utopian reformers and a variety of integrators shared in equal measure what might be called African nationalism." It was indeed a curious and enviable mélange. One that will be enjoyed and re-examined for decades to come, but undoubtedly never again as well as **When Harlem Was In Vogue**.

By
Paula R.
Washington

People On the Move

Black owned and operated Glenview 84, Inc. of Flint, Michigan announces **BLACK BIOGRAPHY**, a new concept of artistic expression and black history from a black perspective that combines the information of the scholar with the drama of the stage.

BLACK BIOGRAPHY is a set of twenty biographical docu-drama cassettes which feature the actual voices/words of twenty past, present and promising minority subjects from history's different areas of expertise. Among them are Sojourner Truth, Benjamin E. Mays, Jim Beck-worth, Julian Bond, Guendolyn Brooks, Hank Aaron and Marian Anderson.



These tapes, with original music and sound effects, have been geared toward individual and collective use for entertainment as well as enlightenment. The tapes were conceived, written and produced by Blacks, one a pair of two and one

half years. Considering quality of content and technical excellence, it is the first known venture of its kind.

Wendell B. Harris, Jr., graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy and the Juillard School of Drama, contributed much of the expertise in the field of writing, production and presentation. He was assisted by researchers, writers, actors, consultants and technicians who were chosen for their skills, artistic ability as well as their sensitivity to minority issues. Further information can be secured by writing to **BLACK BIOGRAPHY**, Suite 1000, Harris Building, 124-26 West Kearsley Street, Flint, Michigan 48502.

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THEATRE

New Baraka Satire Photo by Bert Andrews



(L. to R.) Selselo Mareli, Yusef Imas, Seth Sibanda and Rosita Broadwood in a scene from "Boy and Tarzan Appear in A Clearing".

By Edward Lloyd Fleming

"Boy And Tarzan Appear in A Clearing" written by Miroslav Baraka, (noted poet, novelist, essayist, musicologist, editor, dramatist, and native son of Newark, N.J.), is currently being performed Thursdays through Sundays at Henry Street Settlement's New Federal Theatre. The multi-media production, which incorporates photographic, video, and film sequences, is indeed a welcome theatrical change from the "song & dance" which seems to have become the predominant outlet for Black theatrical development. "Boy And Tarzan Appear in A Clearing" is an intensely perceptive study in class structure, leadership motivation, and the ability of the oppressed to overcome oppression. It is a contemporary look at the Tarzan

legend featuring a superb new member cast under the positive direction of George Fennec, who also designed the strategically appropriate setting. The chanting rhythms permeating throughout the production are courtesy of Hugh Massika. Baraka's satire takes place in a present day, jungle clearing in Africa. Positioned downstage left and right, angled out so as to face the audience, are two video screens. Suspended from centerstage is an additional screen used for film and slide projections. A green-curtained backdrop suspended upstage completes the illusion of a clearing. An aged, but nonetheless, virile-appearing Tarzan, pretentiously portrayed by Jack R. Marks, meanders into the clearing. He is lost. Here, Tarzan encounters his now grown son, Boy, defectively created by

Rod McClean. It seems as though Tarzan is losing control over his kingdom. The restless "woogles", (native Africans), are forcing him out. Boy, a young, liberal/radical mixture who has just completed his post colonial training, devises a plan whereby his father can maintain full control over the "woogles". They establish Stam, an orco "woogle", as Prime Minister. The three, however, underestimate the power of the workers and the peasants, represented here in fluid, sensitive performances by James Pickens, Jr. as Mikant, a city dock worker, and Christine Campbell as Ayanna, a country peasant woman. Other members of the outstanding cast include Rosita Broadwood, Yusef Imas, Selselo Mareli, and Seth Sibanda. For more information call the Box Office (212) 598-0400.

"One Mo' Time"

By Ronald Haynes

Back in 1926, New Orleans' Lyric Theatre entertained nightly with attractions such as Beatie Smith, Ma Rainey and others famous and not so famous. Black Vaudeville was in full swing and provided a showcase for singers, dancers, musicians and comedians. However, the pay was low and the traveling conditions rough.

Manhattan's Village Gate Theatre vividly recreates this era with its production of "One Mo' Time". In it, Big Bertha Williams brings her touring company of stager-dancers to the Lyric Theatre. Their expert performing is contrasted with the usual, good natured backstage bickering. Big Bertha is a commanding figure who is not, however, above the din of denigrating comments that run rampant in the

dressing room. Ma Reed and Thelma are two street-wise dames who have seen it all. Papa Du, the lone male in the troupe, is a smooth character who gives the impression of being slightly above it all. This cozy company has to deal with delayed paychecks, cramped dressing quarters and a comically dictatorial theatre owner. At the Village Gate the audience, in a coherent setting, is the audience of the Lyric Theatre. The use of this common theatrical device makes us feel more a part of the proceedings.

The emphasis here is on the songs. Some well known standards ("Black Bottom", "The Darktown Strutter's Ball", "After You've Gone") are performed, as well as lesser known ones. And Bruce Strickland (Papa Du), Fozzie Jo Thomas (Ma Reed), Peggy Alston

(Thelma) and Carol Woods (Big Bertha), and James "Red" Wilcher (Theatre Owner) interpret the material with real vitality. Mo' Woods, in particular, shows versatility in her renditions of the moving ballad "Muddy Water", the earthy "Kiechan Mac", and the saucy "The Right Key But the Wrong Way Hole", the latter having lyrics that are more potent by their suggestiveness than the more obvious songs written today.

Lillete Harris Jenkins (piano), Eddie Benfield (clarinet), Clay Burt (drums), John Buckingham (tuba), and Dick Vance (trumpet) perform marvelously in ensemble and in solo to round out a complete musical evening.

Directed by Vernel Bagneris, "One Mo' Time" is one fine evening of musical comedy entertainment.

THE NEWAR THI

The American Dance scene has been greatly influenced by Black Dance, from the slaves dancing around campfires, imitating their masters in the "snake walk" to

caribbean calypso and modern tap and jazz dance.

Much attention has been paid to the social dances of Blacks featuring such outstand-

ing dancers as Bill Robinson, but the first widely known Black dance company was the Katherine Dunham Company which began in Chicago, moved to New York and from

there toured the rest of the United States as well as Europe. Today perhaps the most widely recognized Black Dance company is the Alvin Ailey Company with the Dance Theatre of Harlem running a close second. Both of these dance companies are New York based, however since the early 1960's there has been an explosion of Black dance companies throughout the United States. Currently, there are approximately 50 Black Dance Companies throughout the States. Of these companies, the ones that are New York based seem to get the most publicity. It is unfortunate since there are many good and some excellent companies located in places like Detroit, Cleveland, San Francisco, and New Orleans.

It is a proven fact that a successful major performance of a performing arts organization in New York City can dramatically help the growth of an organization. For example, the Cleveland Ballet in their recent appearance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music spent close to \$80,000 to promote and advertise their concerts in the hope that this New York attention would bring them the critical acclaim necessary to be considered a major artistic entity and not just a regional or ethnic cultural concern.

Unlike the Cleveland Ballet, most Black Dance Companies simply cannot afford to spend \$80,000 on a promotional effort in New York City. Indeed, most of these companies have never seen the support necessary to allow the expenditure of such sums. Black Dance companies also suffer because there are very few presenters who are willing to sponsor these because they have not yet reached the stature of an Alvin Ailey or a Rod Rodgers, still, although these companies have not received the attention of the New York press—they are still extremely talented and have much to offer dance audiences.

Currently, the Harlem

Cultural Council's Dance mobile concerts present all of the major New York City Black Dance companies. The series is growing and is becoming a major dance event in New York City.

It is the goal of the Thelma Hill Performing Arts Center to hold a festival entitled "Black Dance in America" which will provide a highly visual showcase of talent including dancers and companies from not only the New York City area, but dance companies from the Midwest who have much to contribute in the way of innovative style, technique and performance. Six companies have been selected which offer a wide range of dance



BLACK DANCE THEATRE

styles. From Philadelphia, the Philadanco Dance Company, The Newark Dance Theatre, the New York-based Mania Lu Parks Company, The International African-American Ballet, The Detroit City Dance Company and the Boston-based Danny Sloan Dance Company. These companies have all received critical acclaim in their own cities and have delighted audiences whenever they have performed. They have a wide range of dance styles from classical ballet, jazz dance, modern and ethnic, to the Lindy Hop.

The Newark Dance Theatre is one such company that takes justifiable pride in its talent and ver-

satility. On October 9 at 7:45 pm the company will perform as a part of the celebration "A Salute To Black Dance In America", presented by the Thelma H. Hill Performing Arts Center at Kilgord Auditorium in Brooklyn. [Ed. Note: see "What's Going On"]

The City of Newark may never become famous as a great center for art and culture, but if you were to pick one place to begin the fifth floor of 45 Academy Street might just be a good place. For it is there, under the auspices of the Garden State Ballet, that young choreographer Alford Gallman has formed a tremendous company of inner city

dancers into one of the most exciting and appealing concert acts around.

On the eve of his company's major 1981 performance, the premiere of a new Ballet called Inner visions, Mr. Gallman has taken time out to share his thoughts on dance, his company, choreography and teaching.

GRAPHICA: How did you become involved with the Garden State Ballet and subsequently The Newark Dance Theatre?

AG: Well Pepet Bethal, my first teacher who encouraged me to dance, was teaching at the Garden State Ballet and I was also his lead male dancer and at the time he thought it was time for me to move on and pass on his knowledge so he gave up his job and gave it to me and encouraged me to teach and that's where I started. I've been there for six and a half years now and my company grew out of the students that I've had during those years.

GRAPHICA: On the eve of the 3rd Big, Bold, Black and in Brooklyn, USA Festival what are your expectations for your company? Are your youngsters prepared for this show?

AG: Yes we are, we're really excited about this big opportunity, exposure to the major critics, full publicity, and we are premiering a new Ballet

called *Innervisions* a work which was inspired by the music and life of Stevie Wonder.

GRAPHICA: Who did you choose Stevie Wonder as a figure to emulate in your Ballet? We know that other artists pick figures to represent their work because they were somehow touched by

these figures. Why Stevie Wonder for you?

AG: I've been inspired by his music and I think

(Continued on Pg. 12)



What's Going On



Gifted Child Program

The Gifted Child Program, which operates at Essex County College on Saturdays, is seeking volunteers to work with young students. In-

terested persons should contact Mr. Cicco Carter, who is in charge of the program by calling (201) 623-4677.

Compute A New Career

The Job Information Center of the education division of the Newark Public Library will present "Careers in Computer Programming from 10 am to 1 pm, November 24 in the fourth floor auditorium of the main library, 375 Newark Street. All aspects of computer programming are included, including educational preparation, oppor-

tunities to work in the field and a description of what the jobs are actually like, will be discussed. Experts in the field will discuss career opportunities, for women, minorities and talk about their work, including the day to day and nature of the jobs. Admission is free. For information, call 733-7792 or 7793.

Minority Voices Magazine

The University of Louisville's Office of Minority Affairs recently published its spring 1981 issue of Minority Voices Magazine. Minority Voices covers a wide spectrum of interests,

from religion to politics. For a copy of the spring issue, send \$2 to the Office of Minority Affairs, University of Louisville, 120 East Brandeis, Louisville, KY 40292.

Class On Food Science

Two pre-professional short courses in food science are being offered at Cook College at Rutgers University. A lecture series, "Food Science Principles and Applications," offered at both fall and spring sessions, will cover such topics as the chemistry of food, sensory and functional properties of foods, nutrition and food preservation.

The second lecture series, "Food Proteins, Carbohydrates and Lipids," set for the spring only, will discuss the structure of proteins, carbohydrates, fats and oils, as well as food applications. The fall session, Oct. 31 - Dec. 12, and the spring session, March 6 - April 17, will be held at the Food Science Building on the Cook College Campus.

Portraits In Black

Portraits in Black, a one-man performance by Broadway actor Darryl Craxton, will open the Newark Public Library's 1981-82 season of public

performances for adults, at 2 pm Oct. 31 in the auditorium of the library, 5 Washington Street. The show, developed by Craxton, is a compilation

of writings by modern and earlier Black writers, ranging from Nikki Giovanni to Frederick Douglass to Derek Walcott to traditional work songs. The performance is open to the public with no admission

charge. Following the performance there will be a reception, giving the audience an opportunity to meet the performer. For additional information contact Cary Frederick at the library by calling 733-7771.

Exhibition

"Vincent Smith: Works on Paper" will be exhibited at the Stiles Post Museum in Jamaica, from Oct. 24 to Dec. 28, 6:30 to 9 p.m. The exhibition represents new directions explored by Vincent Smith, a prominent artist, whose work has received widespread recognition in the U.S. and abroad.

Presented in the exhibit are recent gouache, collage, and monographs by Smith that are sensitive and contemporary in their conception, displaying a unique vitality and sophistication.

For further information, contact Tom Lloyd, 623-5199.

Ballet Troupe Starts School

The Garden State Ballet has opened a new school in Rutherford where registrations for classes in ballet and jazz are now being accepted.

The studio is located at 28 Glen Rd., around the corner from the William Carlos Williams Center which, when completed, will become the home theater of the Newark-based ballet company.

Classes will be led by company founder Fred Demeli and his son.

Stephen, Alfred Gallman, artistic director of the Newark Dance Theatre and a member of the Fred Benjamin Dance Company, and Sarah Wisdom-Maresco, formerly of the Chicago Open Ballet.

Students in the children and teenage division will have a chance to participate in the Garden State Ballet's touring production of "The Nutcracker" this year.

Writer's Workshop

The Frank Silvera Writers' Workshop is now accepting new reading scripts for its fall 1981-82 season. All interested playwrights should submit their scripts as quickly as possible to the FSWW Headquarters. The workshop reading critique series will begin Saturday, October 31st, 3:00 p.m. through Monday, December 14, 1981. The winter/spring season commences Monday, January 4th, 1981, 7:30

p.m. at 317 West 125th Street at Nicholas Avenue. FSWW is again offering a playwrights' seminar series this season. A master class in playwrighting and writing for film and television. The playwright facilitators will be headed by Richard Wesley and Charles Fuller. Registration is requested for this limited program. For further information call: (212) 662-8463.

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LOST WOMEN

Nella Larsen: Mystery Woman of the Harlem Renaissance



by Mary Helen Washington

There are two "colored" movies—innumerable parties—and cards. Cards played so intensely that it fascinates and repulses at once.

Movies worthy and worthless—but not even a low-caste spoken stage.

Parties, plentiful. Music and much that is old and color and gaiety. But they are like the richest chocolate, stuffed costly chocolate that makes the taste go stale if you have too many of them. That makes plain whole bread taste like eshes.

"On Being Young—A Woman—and Colored"

Marta O. Bonner wrote this essay on being a young, black, middle-class woman in the 1920s, and won the 1925 essay contest sponsored by the NAACP's *Crisis* magazine, edited by W.E.B. DuBois. Three years after Bonner's essay won the *Crisis* prize, Nella Larsen published the first of her two novels, *Quicksand* and *Passing*, which dealt with this same problem: the marginal black woman of the middle class, who was both unwilling to conform to a circumscripted existence in the black world and unable to move freely in the white world.

We may perhaps think this is a strange dilemma for a black woman—to experience or certainly an atypical one, for most black women, at now, were struggling against much more naked and brutal realities and would be contemptuous of so esoteric a problem as feeling uncomfortable among black people. Is there anything relevant in the lives of women who so regrettably expected to live in Harlem in the middle-class enclave of Sugar Hill, to summer at resorts like Idlewild in Michigan, to join exclusive black clubs and so on? Weren't the interests that preoccupied Larsen in her work, just the spoiled tantrums of "little yellow dream children" grown up?

But during the 1920s, Larsen's novels enjoyed some popularity as "uplift novels" that presented proof that blacks were intelligent, refined, and morally equal to whites. The novel about the fair-skinned woman who challenged color lines to improve her social situation was viewed as a kind of protest against a rigid caste system. Even militants like DuBois appreciated the struggles of the educated black elite he called the "Talented Tenth."

Fifty years after the heyday of her very brief literary career, Larsen is for the

most part unknown, unread, and dismissed—both by black critics and their white counterparts—even though her perceptive inquiries speak clearly to the predicament of the middle-class black woman of our own generation.

Her preoccupation with the theme of marginality was the first venture into an ocean that blacks would navigate in somewhat larger numbers as the Afro-American experience is modified for some of us by greater access to education, economic resources, and social mobility. One subtle effect of this change has been the loosening of the more obvious ties of commonality between the privileged few and the majority of the black community—ties that may have had a clearer purpose when racial barriers were more solid.

There were many reasons for Larsen to choose, in the 1920s, the theme of the black woman as outsider. There were the contradictions of her own life. Larsen's mother was a white woman from Denmark, her father, a black West Indian. Widowed when Larsen was a young girl, her mother remarried, this time to "one of her own kind." In the new all-white family—father, mother, and second daughter—Larsen's blackness was an em-

barrassment. In a 1929 newspaper interview, Larsen confirms a painful isolation from them: "I don't see my family much now. It might make it awkward for them, particularly my half-sister."

Larsen was constantly negotiating the chasm between black and white. For a while she studied at Fisk, the black university in Nashville. Then she enrolled for three years at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark, where her white relatives lived. Little is known about this three-year period of her life in Europe, though the autobiographical character Helga Crane, the mulatto outcast in *Quicksand*, suggests some possible scenarios. Perhaps, like Helga, she was received warmly by her Danish relatives, and treated as something of a curiosity, her dark skin standing out in vivid relief against so many pale blacks. Helga also grows disenchanted playing the role of exotic freak and finds herself "longing desperately to be surrounded by those laughing and laughing and to be immersed in the warm spontaneity of black Harlem life."

Larsen returned to the States and enrolled in another black school, Lincoln Training School for Negroes, where she graduated in 1915. She went to another black setting, Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, where she worked as a nurse. She was 22 years old when she abruptly left Tuskegee after only one year—the exact age of Helga Crane when she too left her job at a Southern black college, disgusted with its hostility to individuality and innovation. It was a society with a sentimental, formal code of behavior, perhaps even more complicated and rigid than the highest upper class white society. Helga finds it intolerable among blacks who preach racial solidarity and yet value color-coded status and hate the softly blurred speech of their own race.

A similar experience probably accounts for Larsen's abrupt departure from Tuskegee for New York. There she found a children's librarian for eight years, during which she wrote the only two books she would ever publish. Nella Larsen won a Guggenheim in 1930, the first black woman to win a creative writing award from that foundation, and she traveled to Spain to work on a third novel. It was never completed. Instead, Nella Larsen entered into a 30-year silence. She worked as a supervising nurse at Bethel Hospital in Brooklyn, neither parting for white nor identifying with blacks. She died in obscurity in Brooklyn in 1963.

There are a few clues about why Nella Larsen fell silent as a literary voice. In 1930 she was accused of plagiarizing a story that was published in *Forum* magazine. Though she was supported by her editor, who had seen several drafts of the story, she was nonetheless devastated by the criticism. Then in 1932, she was divorced from her husband, Dr. Elmer Innes, a physician at Fisk University. The divorce was cruelly sensationalized by one widely read black newspaper, the *Baltimore Afro-American*, reported "news" that Professor Innes was involved with a white woman and that Larsen's frequent trips to Europe had helped to cause the breakup and added that she was "insane." Fisk wrote that Larsen had tried to kill herself by jumping out of a window.

These two events of public shame, plus a fragile and vulnerable personality, a sense of isolation that made her feel alienated even to her friends, and a deep-seated ambivalence about her racial status combined to reinforce her sense of herself as the Outsider and may finally have pushed her into a life of obscurity.

Always there is the ambivalence: in her personal correspondence, Larsen is detached and aloof speaking about "the Negroes" as though she was observing from a comfy seat, and there is the unmistakable pride she ascribes the style and coping power of poor blacks in the South. She once wrote in a letter to Carl Van Vechten, a white novelist and critic of the Harlem Renaissance period, that she found poor Southern blacks quaint and amusing: "Too never seen anything quite so true to what's expected. Mostly black and good-natured and apparently quite harmless, thoughtfully clean and decked out in the most appalling colors, but somehow just right. Terribly poor." Then she hastens to add that the poor whites by comparison are tragic and depressing.

What happens to a writer who is legally black but internally identifies with both blacks and whites, who is supposed to be content as a member of the black elite, but feels suffocated by its narrowness, who is emotionally rooted in the black experience and yet wants to live in the whole world not confined to a few square blocks and the mentality that make up Sugar Hill?

Her two novels give no indication that Nella Larsen ever solved this problem of duality. All of Larsen's women characters choose self-destruction, and yet her novels sensitively explore the consciousness of the marginal black woman, Larsen's characters—Helga Crane, Irene Redfield, and Clare Kendry—are black women out of step with their time, as middle-class black women in the 1920s. They are strange projectiles, or plants trying to sustain themselves without roots or nourishment, they are detached and isolated from the black community. Helga Crane feels claustrophobic in the claustrophobic college and in black Harlem where she is forced to observe taboos and conventions that contradict her spirit. The prescription against wearing bright colors because bright colors supposedly emphasize a dark-skinned woman's blackness amuses her, for example, but she sees it as one of the innumerable internal controls people of ready under severe re-

pression. Even more intolerable for Helga is the absolute law against any kind of interracial mixing, which Helga's Harlem friends consider an act of disloyalty to the race. One woman in *Quicksand* is a black blonde, a woman dancing publicly with white men. Helga is never able to completely deny her blackness, so she lives with resentment and rancor, having to "ghettoize" her own self.

In Larsen's second novel, *Passing*, one can see most clearly how she failed to resolve the dilemma of the marginal woman. The central character, Clare Kendry, is married to a white man and has been passing for white all of her married life. Passionate and daring, the mysterious Clare lives in both the black and white worlds, feeling no permanent allegiance to either, and every day of existence is an anguish of the tragic misadventure. The golden and "ghetto" woman is simply determined to escape the power of her childhood and to have whatever she wants in life regardless of the price or danger.

Passing becomes, in Larsen's terms, a metaphor for the risk-taking experience, the life lived without the supports other black women (Continued on Pg. 18)

MUSIC

"Coach" calls a time out—acting as a "coach" for the Emotions during the recording of their upcoming "New Affair" album in L.A., Earth, Wind and Fire's Maurice White (second from left) joins producer Bill Myers (left) and Jeanette and Wanda Hutchison (third and fourth from left) in listening to a playback of one of the songs. From the look of it, it seems they hear more of the hit sound that has made both the Emotions and White famous



The road life of a successful touring band is more tough than it is glamorous, but for the three attractive Dunning sisters who sing with the Saltoun recording group Skyy, it's a lot easier with some help

from their friends—the guys in the band. "They are absolute sweethearts on the road," says Skyy's Bonnie Dunning.

One might expect the good-natured rowdiness that is part of road life to

come from the men of Skyy, but as Bonnie confesses, "It's really us girls who get silly. The guys are actually very protective of us and calm."

The Dunning sisters' idea of parties and fun on tour

aren't very wild. "We'll usually go out to the movies or dinner together," says Skyy's Delores Dunning-Crawford, the eldest sister. "Or sometimes we'll all climb in our van and head to a mall to go shopping

Every once in a while we'll go to a club after the show. But you can't really party a whole lot and keep up the pace."

"The guys are real straight and laid-back," says Skyy's Delores Dun-

ning-Milgrom. "They're like our brothers, and I don't think going out on the road would be as good without them."

"Blacks: Inclusion, Not Exclusion Needed"

Racism—personal and institutional, subtle and overt—is still widespread in America. It is not confined to Southern or rural or blue collar areas but can be found even at colleges and universities, environments generally considered progressive, thinking and tolerant of cultural differences, say two University of Pennsylvania social work instructors.

Associate Dean Howard Arnold and Associate Professor Samuel Sylvester of Penn's School of Social Work are black, and both continue to observe and experience the signs of racism on campus and on city streets. Both say blacks have not gained as much in their struggle for equal opportunity as many whites may believe.

"The so-called black colleges are still educating 50 percent of the college population of blacks," said Arnold. "Despite the other 50 percent around the country, and you're not talking about significant numbers of blacks at any white institutions."

He said there are vast numbers of unemployed blacks because the public education system has failed to accomplish what it is supposed to. Affirmative action, with white women the only significant beneficiaries, has also failed.

Minorities, he said. The economic system still makes it difficult for blacks to get loans, and the media portrayal of blacks still do not do them justice.

"There are more blacks on TV than there were in the 1950's and 60's," said Arnold, "but there is still something very negative about how blacks are portrayed, how they express themselves in a loud, rhythmic fashion and in a jargon that is not reflective of all blacks."

Blacks are as diverse as any other group, he said, but they are stereotyped as being monolithic.

In an effort to confront some of these problems, a series of public forums on racism was held at Penn this past academic year. They were attended by students, faculty and administrators, and Arnold and Sylvester were also involved. Because of the interest generated in the forums, two courses on racism, its causes and elimination that had been only for social work students have been opened next year to the general student population.

Whites must address racism, Arnold and Sylvester say, before any significant improvement can take place. Blacks and Hispanics have been told that if they are not accepted as equal, they will be accepted as equal in

American society. Instead, they have found they cannot change enough. New groups—immigrant ethnic and racial minorities—have always been expected to change while American society remained unchanged. As an effect, the perspective of white-skinned privilege groups," said Arnold. "I think racism is basically an effect of the perspective of white-skinned privilege groups."

"The solution is not to get Hispanics and blacks to be more white," said Arnold. "It is looking at cultural differences and people who are a different color with some value and respect."

Racism is rooted in economic, social and psychological factors, said Sylvester, and it leads to the stereotyping of people.

"It is both prejudice and having the power to carry out that prejudice," he said. "And it is more than personal. It is an institutional policy and goals prevent the individual from making progress in the system."

Arnold added that racism can be used as a tool

to further what is not a longer a conscious process. It becomes part of policy, rules and practices, and people are not aware they are acting in a racist way.

"I think racism is basically an effect of the perspective of white-skinned privilege groups," said Arnold. "I think there is in racism a notion of white superiority that people still believe in. There is an effort to hold on to that because it is so much tied to the definition of one's self."

"It's no accident all the fear that came out of affirmative action. Institutions have many minds that are there has been an uproar about the threat to whites, that affirmative action takes away white jobs and gives them to blacks."

Instead, affirmative action should be based on the concept of inclusion.

"Institutional racism is operated on the concept of exclusion," said Sylvester. "It has excluded blacks and included whites."

Lost Women

(Continued from p. 13)

man clung to in order to survive in a white-dominated, male-dominated society. One clear indication of Clare's striving for autonomy is that she is never called by her married name, Mrs. Bellini. She is only and always Clare Kennedy, a woman of such passion and vitality that she mocks the shallowness of her childhood friend, the pretentious and proper Irene Redfield.

Why does Clare pass for white? Because it enables her to marry a man of means. Because she, like most other black women of the 1920's, if she achieved middle-class status, did it by virtue of a man's presence in her life, by virtue of his status—a grandfather who owned an undertaking business, a father who became a doctor, a husband entered to public office.

Larsen's failure in dealing with the problem of marginality is implicit in its very choice of "passing" as a symbol or metaphor of deliverance for her women. It is an obscene form of salvation. The women who pass are required to deny everything about their past—their childhood, their family, places with memories, folk customs, folk rhythms, their language, the entire long line of people who have gone before her.

In the terms of the conveyance—that she has a child with a dark complexion, what if the man into

an old school friend, how does she, letten, placidly to racial stars? And more, where does the woman who passes find the equality to live by the privileged status that is based on the repression of her own people?

Larsen's heroines are all finally destroyed some where down the paths they choose. Helga Crane loses herself in a loveless marriage to an old black preacher by whom she has five children in as many years. She finally retreats into illness and silence, eventually admitting to herself a suppressed hatred for her husband. Passing? Irene Redfield suspects an affair between her friend Clare (recently surfaced from the white world) and her black physician husband. This threatens her material and psychological security. In the novel's melodramatic ending, she pushes Clare off the balcony of a seventeenth-floor apartment and strikes into unconsciousness when she is questioned about Clare's death.

And Nella Larsen, who created Helga and Irene, chose oblivion for herself. From the title we know of the last 30 years of her life, she handed the problem of marginality by default, by not including any racial or cultural identity. The title was so complex that the use of her biographers couldn't find an obituary for

her. "I couldn't even bury Nella Larsen," she said.

But unlike the woman in her novels, Larsen did not die from her marginality. She lived 70 years, was an active participant in the Harlem Renaissance, traveled abroad, and worked as a nurse for 40 years. She was an unconventional woman by 1920's standards; she wore her dresses short and her hair styled in a bob, she was respected religion and loved in defiance of the rules that most black women of her education and means were bound by. She lived through the conflicts of the marginal and she let them out rationally.

Why didn't she leave us the greater legacy of the mature model, the perceptions of a woman who confronts the pain, alienation, isolation, and struggles of those considered outcasts until now? Why didn't she leave us the greater legacy of the mature model, the perceptions of a woman who confronts the pain, alienation, isolation, and struggles of those considered outcasts until now? Why didn't she leave us the greater legacy of the mature model, the perceptions of a woman who confronts the pain, alienation, isolation, and struggles of those considered outcasts until now?

If there are any answers to these questions, we have to look again at the two novels to find them. Both novels and with images of numbness, suffocation, blurred perceptions, loss of consciousness, invisibility. It is a world even more restricted than the one in *Quicksand*.

Ellen West, the Invisible Man, another novel about marginality and the Afro-American experience. The "invisible man" at least has the choice of a range of work options, military, or politics, or even to be a writer. Clare, on the other hand, can imagine a black woman character replicating the invisible activities of a black man who—in literature and life—is at least sometimes physically free to hop a freight North or to hopbid it down the track from coast to coast as a Pullman porter, to organize and lead political movements without apology, to wield the tools of an occupation other than personal service to black women. They can be artists in Europe or flutists in New York or farmers in Iowa or retirees in Florida without suffering the permanent absence of community. In their resistance to black women are estranged from the right to aspire and achieve in the wide world of thought and action, *Quicksand* and *Passing* are brilliant witnesses to the position of a colored woman in a white, male world.

She did not solve her own problems, but Larsen made us understand as no one did before her that the image of the middle-class black woman as a coldly self-centered snob, chattering inelegantly at bridge club and society meetings, was as much a mask as the grin on the face of Stepin Fetchit. The women in her novels, like Larsen, are drawn to extremes, and psychological extremes in their attempts to handle ambivalence, marginality, racism, and sexism. She has shown us that behind the carefully manicured exterior, behind the appearance of security is a woman who hears the beating of her wings against a vaulted prison.

As black women move further into areas that were once the private reserve of whites, those few of us—those fortunate few whose lives are not stunted and dreamless—are finding ourselves facing the tensions that Nella Larsen knew, and it is up to us to do something about them, to take what she started further than she was able to go.

The sweet music of the Black Bottom is reaching into the background while a new chorus of possibilities is playing insistently and captivantly. Like Paula Marshall, Beena, Alice Walker's Sarah Davis, and Nella Larsen's driven heroines, we are condemned to a new freedom: We will not be able to define ourselves exclusively by the parameters of the black community, but we must not become unbridled by the white and black in our tradition; otherwise, like Larsen's rootless women, we will have to live out the absurdities of a racist and sexist society. There will still be achievement conflicts and symptoms of marginality and struggles to avoid cheap status-seeking and slip-ups to the sympathy which may not be understood. But there will also be what Nella Larsen was never to know: work not thwarted nor diminished by petty and surreal restrictions, and, ultimately, some liberation.

Mary Helen Washington, an associate professor of English at the University of Massachusetts (Boston), edited "Black-Eyed Susan: Classic Stories By and About Black Women" and "Midnight Birds: Stories of Contemporary Black Women Writers" (Both Doubleday/Achor).

She recently completed a year as a fellow of the Bunting Institute of Radcliffe.

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Black American Landmarks

The Schomburg: A Legacy

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The Detroit Sound—Revisited

**Black Seminoles: Their History and
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